



**ZIMBABWE CIVIC AND REGIONAL SOLIDARITY CONSULTATION FORUM
HARARE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, HARARE ZIMBABWE
20-21 JULY 2009**

Draft Report

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the process and content of the Zimbabwe Civic and Regional Solidarity Consultation Forum. It includes a brief background to the Forum, the main points of the addresses given by the key note speakers and presenters within each session, a summary of the main issues arising on the first day, the outcomes of the Working Groups that looked at the way forward and some concluding remarks.

The purpose of the report is to serve as a stimulant for report backs and broader discussions amongst solidarity formations across the region and within Zimbabwe. It is not intended as a comprehensive record of everything that was said and discussed nor does it provide a work plan for solidarity activities moving forward. As is the nature of an emerging formation like the network movement that the Regional Solidarity Movement is becoming, various groupings will choose to place more emphasis on some aspects of the strategic direction that emerged while de-emphasising others. Within this diversity the areas of common focus that surround the potential for Regional lobbying and advocacy actions are expected to provide a strong basis for joint action.

It is expected that delegates to the forum will use the emerging direction to stimulate and add vigour to solidarity actions in each SADC member state, including a strong focus on actions surrounding the forthcoming SADC summit, aimed at calling SADC to account and give substance to its role as the guarantor of the GPA. Strategies were also developed in response to the ongoing humanitarian needs of the Zimbabwean migrant community and the longer term advocacy intentions and organisational strengthening needs of the solidarity movement. Collective direction in relation to the controversial issue of sanctions and civic responses to the critical economic recovery of Zimbabwe was also formulated.

This direction is articulated in the reports from the Working Groups on Day Two. The Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum in South Africa and the Botswana Coalition of Civil Society Organisations on Zimbabwe were mandated to play a leading role in taking these outcomes forward.

In the review meeting held by the organisers immediately following the Forum a strong recommendation was made for a follow-up gathering of Forum delegates within 6 months to monitor progress and add further impetus to the implementation of the emerging direction. This would be aimed at strengthening the Regional Solidarity Movement and consolidating the relationships that were built between Zimbabwean civics and their counterparts from across the region.

Background

The concept note that galvanised support for the Forum recognised the new terrain facing Zimbabwean civics and the regional solidarity initiatives that had emerged since the signing of the GPA in September 2008. In an effort to enable civil society to engage more effectively within these new conditions the following objectives defining the purpose of the Forum were developed:

- To discuss the consequences of the GPA for the Zimbabwean people, the state, and the civic movement and the implications this has for Zimbabwean Civics and the Regional Solidarity Movement
- Re-affirm and strengthen existing regional solidarity networks, national civic and solidarity formations and deepen efforts to build a regional solidarity movement
- Develop strategies that inform practical regional and local solidarity actions that will impact positively on the material, social and political lives of Zimbabweans, informed by past solidarity actions.
- Provide stakeholders from different sectors who operate at different levels with an opportunity to interact, network and share perspectives

A joint organising committee consisting of the Zimbabwe Institute, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, the Feminist Political Education project and the ACTION Support Centre was established to drive the process. The Southern Africa Liaison Office through its support to the Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum in South Africa also formed part of the organising team.

A key to the success of the Forum lay in the preparation work that was done by the regional solidarity initiatives in the days preceding the meeting in Harare. Preparation meetings were held in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia. Each of these meetings produced a report which is available on request, aimed at informing local solidarity groupings and mandating delegates to the conference who will be reporting back to their broader constituencies.

Special provision was made for the specific inclusion of women in the Forum. A strong focus on ensuring gender parity in the identification of speakers, and Forum participants, kept the gender aspects of the transition process sharply in focus throughout the proceedings.

Overview

A total of 314 participants attended the Forum over the 2 days, including 57 people from 9 African countries beyond Zimbabwe borders. These included delegates from Swaziland, South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho, Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, Botswana and Mozambique. Last minute cancellations and poor communication left delegates from Malawi and Angola unable to make travel arrangements in time. Nevertheless they will be included in the follow-up discussions that take place.

In total over 60 different organisations, networks and movements were represented, including several umbrella groupings. During the Forum inputs were received from a wide variety of academics, activists and policy makers, including Priscilla Mushonga, from the Joint Monitoring Committee, the Minister of State, Gordon Moyo and SADC mediation team representative, Sydney Mufamadi. Within the constraints of time space was made for as much engagement with the

presenters as possible. The dialogue that was begun through these engagements informed the working group discussions that took place on the second day.

While Day One focused primarily on exploring and understanding the current transition, Day Two looked more closely at the state of the Regional Solidarity movement and was more forward looking in its focus. An addendum that summarises the various inputs from the speakers is attached as an addendum to this summary report. This includes a full transcription of the session in which former minister Sydney Mufamadi, from the SADC mandated mediation team that facilitated the signing of the GPA, gave input and answered questions. This addendum is available on request.

Day One 20th July 2009

Topics

Understanding and exploring the Global Political Agreement
The Economics of Transition
Additional Key Transition Issues
The social, economic and political impact of the GPA on ordinary people

Summary of critical issues emerging from the first day

- Zimbabwe is in a political transition that predates the signing of the GPA.
- The transition is **IRREVERSIBLE**. It may be tortuous, may be able to be stalled, or slowed down, but it cannot be stopped.
- The rules of the political game have changed.
- Civil Society must disengage from partisan party politics and begin to engage with policy platforms.
- 3 scenarios emerge from the current state of transition:
 - Forward movement toward economic and political reform- **Recovery**; feasible but not guaranteed- most desirable
 - Backward slippage towards political disorder and economic collapse- **Regression**; omnipresent, not inevitable
 - Political deadlock and stalled reform- **Stalemate**- most likely scenario. The scenario currently prevailing
- The transition is supposed to deliver a free and fair election through institutional and legislative reform and constitutional reform and the creation of a violence free environment.
- An exclusive focus on Constitutional reform allows backsliding in other areas – like media reform, the behaviour of the police etc.

- Remember that at all times and in all these processes there are issues specific to the needs of women that need to be taken into account and pushed for.
- As the public face of the GPA JOMIC is a contested terrain, a continuation of the negotiating forum that is aimed at making the agreement work.
- The language and actions of people within JOMIC will reflect this, the aim of those within JOMIC is to keep the GPA process alive, and moving forward, however difficult this may seem at times.
- The economic crisis is a crisis of desperation and a crisis of accumulation.
- The economic recovery of Zimbabwe and the related issues of sanctions and investment are part of the regional economy and its growth and recovery.
- Within the SADC region Zimbabwe is extreme, but it is not exceptional.
- Winning elections and winning state power are not the same thing. We need more nuanced, more strategic and a more varied range of interventions to shift power, no single intervention can achieve this.
- Meaningful civic and civil society participation in the processes of reform, in whatever form this takes, is a critical part of the process.
- There are risks associated with occupying the democratic space that has become available.
- The struggle is far from over, it is tougher than diamonds, it is not going to be easy.
- It needs commitment, good faith in implementation, human and financial resources, and the managing of spoilers, rent seekers and opportunists.
- The alternatives to maintaining the momentum of the transition are too ghastly to contemplate.
- In the view of some it is better to participate in official reform processes than not to, but it is critical to respect the views of those who are not participating.
- This is a time to be listening to people and recording their stories, other issues of transitional justice may be difficult to push at this time.
- For as long as sanctions are there we are not going to get the support we need, but our language on the sanctions issue should be about addressing the issues underlying the imposition of sanctions, not necessarily calling for sanctions to be lifted.
- Within the context of the GPA and the words that describe how the process is supposed to be happening people have still become the victims of state violence, including, beatings, illegal arrest, abduction and detention.
- The actions of the police and state security are still brutal and the police act with impunity.
- Prosecution is used by the state against activists as a tool for demobilisation.

Key areas to focus on include:

- Sanctions
- Institutional reform that goes beyond the legislative reform of the GPA
- Making the state and state and regional institutions accountable

Critical issues for the Regional Solidarity Movement

- *There are 4 signatories to the GPA – SADC as the fourth signatory has an obligation as the guarantor of the agreement*
- *The crisis in Zimbabwe is no longer confined to Zimbabwe, now, more clearly than ever, it is a regional and even a continental crisis.*

Day Two 21st July 2009

Topics

Inputs from Regional delegates
Regional roles and responsibilities
Positioning the civic movement in times of transition
Strategies, tactics and programmes of action

Working group outcomes

Developing longer term advocacy and lobbying strategies

- There is a need to reaffirm the vision and mission of our advocacy agenda around Zimbabwe
- This should be led by the need to create a democratic and violence free environment
- We also need to develop young leadership that can play a role in building a new Zimbabwe
- A strong focus should be in opposition to the privatisation of social services and the need for social justice
- Advocacy and lobbying should be complemented by workshops, conferences and exchange programmes
- We should work together as Regional solidarity formations to harmonise the approaches to Zimbabwe by SADC member states
- Strategic alliances between solidarity formations should be forged that can engage the private sector
- We should be sharing the documented abuses of perpetrators of violence, keep a record of the victims of rights abuses and seek ways of promoting healing
- There is a need to set up a reliable information base on conflict early warning that strengthens existing initiatives at community level, and devolves information from the national level in Zimbabwe to the grassroots
- Longer term advocacy will need to focus on conflict management and peacebuilding

Building the solidarity movement

The solidarity movement notes the importance of creating critical information sharing platforms such as this one and other alternative space that may open up as well. This is where we discuss, analyze, reflect and inspire one another. We must at this point harness the SADC region and our continent at large into an all-round and effective force for people to people solidarity in the true spirit of the idea that YES WE CAN!

However, the solidarity movement will continue to guard against trends that seek to replace popular solidarity initiatives by highly fragmented and sometimes bureaucratic initiatives, largely driven by those who have means at their disposal and attempt to influence the direction of the solidarity movement, without any popular mandate of grassroots people and the affected.

We must make sure that there is full participation of the people of Africa in the activities of our solidarity movement. Efforts to unite and harmonise regional solidarity activities of different structures should be encouraged, though the principle of building a co-ordinating structure that will bring together all the solidarity initiative and activities to maximise cohesion and avoid competition and in some instances duplication of activities that could be done collectively. This translate into sharing and pooling together of our resources, capacity, sharing of experiences and lessons, as well as support for smaller solidarity initiatives by those with much bigger capacity.

In this regard, the following issues are critical to our work in building a strong solidarity movement in our region;

- Contact details coming out of a gathering such as this must be circulated to everyone to every strategic partner in the solidarity movement (come up with a database of organisation that are critical to the solidarity work)
- We must develop a clear and all encompassing media campaign strategy including utilisation of the broader cyberspace at our disposal.
- We must learn to draw lessons from successful solidarity initiatives surrounding us.
- It must be led and be rooted in those acting in solidarity with those in need of support. In the case of Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Kenya and many other countries must lead the movement. In this regard, it shall always be guided by the momentum in the actual countries of struggle and respect those in whose name solidarity is waged.
- There is a need to develop a common understanding /approaches within our networks in the true tradition of our people to people solidarity.
- Irrespective of country-issue-focus, we must develop strong co-ordination mechanism into one movement. ZSF and BOSCIKOZ have the capacity to lead on this aspect.
- In many instances, our solidarity work is not result-oriented, but activity-driven, e.g. marches, border blockades, pickets, demonstrations. However, a lot more could be done (capacity building of fighting forces in various countries, exchange programmes, documentation, food and material support, shelter for refugees, research and policy development etc.), which could increase the numbers of those involved in supporting different struggles and broaden the understanding of the issues involved

- Solidarity requires clearly defined goals; short-term, medium-term and long-term, that will assist building common themes and a flowing momentum between those involved in solidarity and those in the actual struggle in the particular country
- It is very imperative that the region is mobilized to demonstrate real solidarity with all that are oppressed. In this regard, it is key that we conduct consistent political education among the masses in order for them to understand the importance and need for regional solidarity with other peoples.
- The solidarity movement must be politically non-partisan, but broadly involving of all social forces and people interested in supporting a particular cause, without allowing local politics to interfere with solidarity work
- The solidarity movement must be nation-wide, fully organized in all strategic corners of Africa.
- Regional solidarity must be unconditional, with no expectations for personal gain and glory. It must be an act of love and care for others, with full respect for the people in whose name solidarity is waged
- It must have a definite character; progressive, democratic, accountable and involving all people interested in participating.
 - Set up a data-base of all the organisations involved in the solidarity movements
 - Set up country solidarity structures
 - Strengthen and transform solidarity forums into broader solidarity groupings
 - Organise exchange visits between countries to enable people-to-people contact at grassroots level
 - Build capacity that equips and sharpens advocacy, lobbying, Peacebuilding and economic transformation skills
 - BOSCIKOZ and ZSF to continue to play a supportive role to assist in building movements in other SADC countries

Regional responses to the humanitarian needs emerging from the crisis

Key focal areas

- IDPs, EDPs, structural violence, HIV/AIDS, collapse of health sector, TB cases are increasing, loss of means of production and livelihoods, collapse of education, collapse of the social welfare support system of the government, breakage of the social fabric, loss of human dignity-mortuaries not working, massive unemployment, Zimbabweans in the Diaspora affected by issues of xenophobia etc, collapse of the informal sector, corruption, infrastructural collapse, deteriorating standards of living, collapse of the judiciary system, brain drain, human trafficking,
- Repatriation of refugees
- Poverty is regional problem need empowerment not food hand outs
- Comprehensive agricultural support

- Need for mobile clinics
- Need for grants to support for community based organisation especially women headed organisation.
- Need to come up with a coordination effort of reaching the Diaspora
- A task team that can influence the SADC
- A civil society committee should be established to work alongside the SADC Humanitarian Assistance Framework that should aim to coordinate humanitarian support.

Preparations for the SADC summit - developing a common advocacy focus

Current information suggests that while the DRC is eligible to take up the chair of SADC from the date of the next summit, currently scheduled for September, South Africa may offer to continue in its current role if the DRC does not have the capacity. The summit may be held in Gaborone, but this is still not confirmed. Local delegates are requested to provide support for the attendance of regional delegates at the Summit. The ZSF was requested to confirm the venue and dates and keep regional delegates informed.

Delegates agreed to organise around a common regional advocacy programme to coincide with mass action in all SADC member states.

The following key issues emerged as critical lobbying focal points:

- GPA has to be implemented fully.
- Attendance of the president to the summit, all principals must attend the summit
- Outstanding issues to the GPA must be addressed
- The issue of shared ministries should be reviewed at this conference
- Continued violence and human rights abuses should be addressed at this summit and SADC should speak out on the removal of all charges against human rights defenders
- Retirement of the service chiefs should be discussed at the summit since they refuse to acknowledge Tsvangirai
- The failure of the GPA to recognize vulnerable groups, including women; youth, disabled. Where provision is made for the participation of women in the GPA the extent to which this has been implemented should be reviewed.
- Judicial, media, electoral and security reforms are needed, priority should not only be given by SADC to constitutional reforms
- Constitution should be people driven- grassroots should be consulted in the making of the constitution
- Sanctions could be used as an excuse for failure to implement the GPA at the summit – this should be guarded against
- Delegation to see the principals individually and hear the challenges they are facing in implementing the GPA
- JOMIC should report back to SADC on the adherence to time-frames and implementation and where there have been transgressions SADC must speak out clearly and take decisive action to ensure compliance

- Zimbabweans themselves should be involved in the advocacy programs for regional solidarity

Towards a regional civil society position on the sanctions issue

The background and history of sanctions was outlined and the distinction made between:

1. Penalties imposed on Zimbabwe in 1997 as a result of Zimbabwe failing to pay arrears of debts to the IMF
2. European Union and Australian targeted sanctions restricting the movement and international investment opportunities for individuals
3. ZIDERA – the Zimbabwe Development and Recovery Act, a United States law which imposed a number of punitive and incentive measures including:
 - a. Restrictions on financial institutions lending money to Zimbabwe
 - b. No support for Zimbabwe in the field of defence and military spending
 - c. Support to democracy initiatives

There was a grudging consensus in favour of the removal of economic restrictions, especially those in ZIDERA, that impact on the recovery of the Zimbabwean economy. This was based on the argument that the success of the GPA depended very much on economic recovery and that continued sanctions would threaten the survival of the GPA.

There was strong opposition to the removal of targeted restrictions against individuals on the grounds that these did not affect the economy as a whole. This was bolstered by the immunity argument that suggested that Mugabe would never have come to the negotiating table without the imposition of these measures and a fear that if they were removed any pressure to honour the GPA would be removed.

There was agreement that civil society should develop a roadmap on sanctions that linked a partial removal to benchmarks of reform.

There was a recommendation that the convenors of the conference should begin a process of civil society engagement to develop such a roadmap.